

H E B. 12. verse 1.

Wherefore let us also, seeing that we are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, cast away every thing that presseth down, and the sinne that hangeth so fast on: let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

I Am loath to spend time in speaking by way of preamble, of the authour, or stile, and phrase of this epistle: Onely in brief, you may please to take notice, that the whole epistle is a kinde of Syllogism, though *expansa manu*, in a *rhetoricall manner*. The Proposition and Assumption whereof are in the former part, unto the words of my text: And the Conclusion from thence unto the end.

This whole verse that I have made choice to treat of at this time, is *Oratio translatitia*, a borrowed or figurative speech, or continued Metaphor throughout. The generall scope, and argument whereof, is matter of exhortation. And for orders sake, I divide it into two parts.

1, The exhortation it self, or the matter whereunto we are exhorted, in these words,
Let us runne the race that is set before us.

A

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2. The circumstances whereby the Apostle forceth his exhortation; which are these three:

1. An inducement or motive; *Seeing that we are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses.*

2. A direction how to prepare, & fit our selves to the performance of the dutie to which we are exhorted; *Casting away every thing that presseth down, and the sinne which hangeth so fast on us.*

3. The manner how we are to runne this race; *With patience.*

This shall suffice for the Analyticall resolution of the words; for these points thus enfolded in order, will (as I suppose) make the whole matter plain and evident.

1. We are to consider the exhortation it self, in these words; *Let us runne the race that is set before us.* It is a Metaphoricall speech familiarly used in the writings of this Apostle, as appeareth not onely here, but also in sundrie other places of his epistles: for so he speaketh to the Corinthians; ^a *Know ye not, that they which runne in a race, runne all; yet one receiveth the prize? So runne that ye may obtain.* And to the Philippians; ^b *And follow hard towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* And by this Metaphor the Apostle admonisheth us of the condition of our life, which is like a race, wherein runners do exercise themselves, and strive for the prize. Chrysostom setteth out this Metaphor more plainly and fully, affirming our life, to be a race, the law and the gospel, to be the two rails or lists; God and the Saints, to be spectators: that we are the runners, and that Je-

sus

^a 1. Cor. 9. 24

^b Philip. 3. 14

is at the goale or mark, as a rewarder, to give the prize, which is eternall life. The life therefore of a Christian is not (as the carnall professour accounteth it) a stool and a cushion, matter of ease. We must not think to be carried to heaven in a feather-bed; our faith is not *sedentaria fides*, a sitting, but a running faith; not an idle, but a working faith; if the Poet said truely,

*Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit, fecitque puer, sudavit, & alsit,
Abstinnit Venere, & vino, &c.*

*c Horat. de
art. poetit.*

If such as runne for an earthly prize, (which commonly is nothing but a whiffe of vain glorie, which perisheth in the enjoying) endure so much both in preparing themselves, and also performing the race; then what pains, what labour should seem too great to us, which runne for a heavenly and everlasting prize? we must not conceive that we are brought into this life, *ad otium & delicias*; to be idle and voluptuous; but to sustain labour, and endure pains and sweat; not to see others runne, but to runne our selves. And therefore we are not to dream of ease and pleasure, in the possession of Christianitie, but let us runne. This life is *b viaregni, non regnum*; but the way to the kingdome, not the kingdome it self. There is no expecting the prize, untill the race be ended. We must not look for *c the crown of righteousness*, with S. Paul, untill with him, we have fought the good fight, finished our course, and kept the faith.

d Bsm.

*e 2. Tim. 4.
7, 8.*

Let us runne the race.] A race is a swift motion, with all earnestnesse and striving: and such must

^f Philip. 3. 1

^g *Pareus in locum.*

^h Heb. 12. 1.

ⁱ Job 7. 1.

^k Act. 14. 22.

^l 2. Tim. 2. 3.

^m Eph. 6. 11. &c.

ⁿ 2. Tim. 4. 7.

our progresse be in the way to heaven : not creeping like snails, but swift as an eagle, ^f following or pressing hard towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus. The originall word *ἀγῶνα*, is observed to signifie ^s both the place to runne in, which the Latines call *stadium*, a race-plot, & also the action it self of running therein. And in the proprietie of the signification thereof, it pointeth out the manner of the race which we are to runne, *viz.* that it must be performed with labour and striving, *more athletarum*, after the manner of champions, or wrestlers: for so I finde the word used by our Apostle in the 4. verse of this chapter, ^h *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood*, *πρὸς τὸν ἀγῶνα τῶν ἀρταγώνιστων*, striving against sinne. And therefore ⁱ Job compareth the life of man to a warfare upon earth. And the Apostle affirmeth the way to heaven, to be ^k through many afflictions. Which moved him to encourage Timothie, and stirre him up in these words, ^l *Thou therefore suffer affliction, as a good souldier of Jesus Christ*. In the race we shall meet, and must encounter with enemies: though it be a race, yet it is *Certamen cursorium*, a running fight, or a fighting race, whether you please. And therefore the Apostle directs us to ^m put on armour, even the whole armour of God, instructing us in every part thereof, from the head to the foot: and that being so armed, we play the souldiers, and ⁿ fight a good fight. And indeed, if the race and way were plain, and without impediments, there needed no such earnest exhortation, to inforce us to enter into it; for who would refuse?

refuse? But we must runne with resolution to out-
 runne, and to overthrow whatsoever doth oppose
 us in the way. We must be like those Jews which
 repaired the Temple in the time of Nehemiah,
 which being beset with many enemies seeking to
 oppose and hinder them, *° wrought upon the wall
 with one hand, and with the other held the sword,* ready
 to defend themselves, and beat back others that
 would attempt to hinder them: so must we be ex-
 pedite and nimble in gathering up our feet to runne
 the race toward heaven; and yet withall carry our
 weapons in our hands, ready to beat back and over-
 throw all such enemies as shall oppose us, stop our
 course, or turn us out of the way. If this was not
 so, every one would be ready to enter into the
 race: but *Hinc illa lacryma;* this is that which dis-
 courageth the carnall man: he would gladly go to
 heaven, but he cannot endure to heare of this la-
 bour and pains, this running, and sweating, and
 fighting. He could heartily wish, with the sonnes
 of Zebedeus, to *° sit at the right hand or left hand
 of Christ in his kingdome:* but he cannot endure to
 heare of drinking of his cup, nor being baptized with
 his baptisme of the crosse: seeing heaven must cost
 so deare, he had rather bid it farewell, and with De-
 mas, *° embrace this present world.* But what race is
 it, that with so much labour and pains, courage
 and fortitude must be performed of us? Let the
 Apostle answer in his own words, *The race that is
 set before us.* The wicked run in their race, and
 that very swiftly, and with great resolution: *° E-*
very one turneth to his race, as the horse rusheth into

° Neh. 4. 17.

° Mat. 20. 21,
22.

° 2. Tim. 4.
10.

° Jer. 8. 6.

^fMat. 7. 13,
14.

^cPfal. 119:32

^u1. Cor. 7. 17

^xVerf. 20.

the battell, through thick and thin, no dromedarie swifter: but alas! it is not in *the race set before us*, but in a race of their own choosing; not in the *strait way that leadeth unto life*, but in the by-paths of sin which lead unto destruction, and the broad way which tendeth unto hell and damnation. We must not runne thus; for then the swifter we are, the more we hasten to our destruction, and the sooner we arrive at hell gates. But our race must be *the race set before us*, our course is limited; we must be sure to keep within the two lists or rails of the Law and the Gospel, wherein God hath set and pointed out this race before us. For therein every Christian may finde out a double race appointed by God for him to runne; 1. The generall race of Christianitie, which all without exception are bound to runne: and it is that which David promisseth to perform; ^c *I will runne the way of thy commandments*. 2. The particular race of every man his vocation or calling, concerning which the Apostle hath an expresse rule; ^u *As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk*. And again, ^x *Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called*. For both these callings we have full and absolute direction in the word of God, in the Law and the Gospel; and whatsoever we finde therein commended unto us, that is *the race set before us*. This therefore doth directly crosse a double point of Poperie. First, their voluntary afflicting themselves by whippings, pilgrimages, and such other like inventions of their own brain, for which they have no ground

ground from the word of God, neither Law nor Gospel. This is not to **take up the crosse of Christ and beare it*; but to devise and frame a crosse unto themselves of their own devising. This is not to *runne the race set before us*; but a race of their own inventing, as if they were wiser then Christ, and could finde out a better way to heaven, then he hath set before us in his Gospel. Secondly, the like may be said of all manner of will-worship, whereof the greatest part of the religion of the Church of Rome consisteth; *viz.* their holy water, their holy ashes, pilgrimages, adoration of reliques, &c. whereof our Saviour Christ saith, *In vain ye worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*: all which when they shall plead by way of merit at the last day, Christ will answer them as God did sometime the Jews in the like case, **Who required these things at your hands?* For these are not the race set before us, but idle inventions and traditions of men.

x Mar. 8. 34.

y Mark 7. 7.

z Isa. 7. 12.

To conclude, by this phrase of speech, the Apostle implieth, that God is *ἀγωνίζων, a race-master*, who bringeth us into this world, as into a race, to runne, and out-runne; to strive and fight, before he give us the prize, which is the crown of glorie: and therefore our race must be directed according to his will, or else we runne in vain, and lose the prize. This consideration of the Author, or Master of the race, doth yeeld unto us a double use.

1. To stirre us up with cheerfulness and alacritic in running this spirituall race; because we have

have *Deum presidem cum caelesti brabio*, God the president of the race with the heavenly prize. Which cannot but notably encourage us in the way of piety, and an holy conversation; according to that which is said of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that,

^a Hcb. 12. 2.

^a For the joy that was set before him, he endured the crosse, despising the shame, and is set at the right hand of the throne of God.

2. The will and presence of God ought to arm us with patience and constancie against all manner of wearinesse, trouble, and difficultie in this race; especially remembring that of the Apostle, ^b God is faithfull, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we be able, but will with the temptation also make away to escape, that we may be able to bear it: for it is as if our Saviour Christ should reach out the heavenly crown towards us, and say, Here it is; winne it, and weare it: or (as Austine saith) as if God should crie from heaven, ^c *Specio vos, luctamini adjuvabo, vincite ego vos coronabo*; I behold, strive and I will help you, overcome and I will crown you. For so he promised unto the Church of Smyrna; ^d Be thou faithfull unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life. And thus much shall suffice concerning the exhortation.

^b 1. Cor. 10. 13.

^c In Psal. 39.

^d Apoc. 1. 10.

2. We are to treat of the circumstances informing the exhortation, which before appeared to be three. I shall not need to repeat them, but to handle them in order.

1. The first, which offereth it self to our consideration, is the motive, or inducement to excite us to the practise of this dutie, in these words,

Wherefore

Wherefore seeing that we are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses. In this inference wherefore, he sheweth to what end it was that he recited so long a catalogue of Saints, whose faith was famous, and excelled under the law, viz. that by their example he might excite and encourage us to tread in their steps, and follow their example. And there is an emphasis in these words, *et huius, let us also*: If they did so happily runne the race, & finish their course, much more ought we to do the like, because of our happie estate above theirs, *et God providing a better thing for us, that they without us should not be perfect*; they but expecting and desiring that which we have seen in the full complement. The Apostle draweth his argument *ab exemplo*, because examples are matter of sense, and for the most part move more then precepts: and also to shew that he doth not perswade us to an impossibilitie; because he sheweth apparently that it hath been done by others before us. It is in effect the same with that of Saint James, *et Take (my brethren) the Prophets for an ensample of suffering adversitie, and of long patience*: as if he had said, Look upon the examples of the Prophets, Patriarchs, & Saints of God, which have runne the race with faith and patience before you. But let us consider the words themselves: *Seeing that we are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses*. Wherein we may observe three things. 1. Why it is called a cloud. 2. Why it is termed great. 3. Whereof it is said to consist; viz. of witnesses.

1. The word *cloud* is here used Metaphorical-

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ly,

^e Hebr. 11.

^e Heb. 11. 40.

^e Jam. 5. 10.

^b *Parvus in locum.*

ly, ^h *pro condensata & copiosa Patrum multitudine;* for the copious and condensate multitude of the Fathers. And they are so called (according to the ancient Fathers) for two reasons: the one whereof is taken from the Cause, and the other from the Effect.

ⁱ *Mal. 4. 2.*

^k *Jam. 5. 17.*

^l *2. Kin. 3. 2.*

^m *1. 1.*

ⁿ *Joh. 12. 32.*

^o *Prov. 15. 15.*

^p *Isa. 45. 2.*

^q *Chap. 1. 8. 4.*

^r *In locum.*

1. From the cause; viz. As clouds are by the heat of the sunne extracted or exhaled out of the grosse substance of the elements of the earth and water; but being elevated and sublimed towards the upper region of the aire, are rarefied and made of a more subtile and celestially nature: So the Saints of God are by the ⁱ *Sunne of righteousness*, as it were, exhaled out of the grosse and sinfull masse of mankinde lost in Adam; but are by him sublimed and transformed into a more excellent, spirituall, and heavenly nature, and at the last translated into heaven it self. So ^k *Elias was a man subject to the like infirmities as we are*, and yet ^l *went up by a whirlwinde into heaven*. But especially hereunto alludeth that of our Saviour Christ himself, ^m *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

2 From the effect; because they produce a parallell effect with the clouds; not ⁿ *clouds without rain*, but ^o *clouds that drop down righteousness*; like unto a ^p *cloud of dew in the heat of harvest*. For so are ^q *Lyra* his words; *Propter vitæ fastigium, & doctrinæ stillicidium, congregatio Sanctorum dicitur nubes;* For the excellencie of their lives, and the sweet distilling showers of their doctrine, the societie of the Saints is called a cloud. For like as sweet showers of rain falling

falling from the clouds, refresh the dry and thirsty ground; so do the examples of the faith and holiness of the Saints, and the patience of the Martyrs of Christ Jesus, together with the sweet distilling drops of their heavenly doctrine, refresh those that are in the ¹ fiery triall. *'Sanguis martyrum est semen Ecclesia; The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church.'*

¹ 1. Pet. 4. 17.
August.

To these two reasons of the ancient Fathers, Mr. Perkins hath added a third, viz. that as the children of Israel had their cloud to guide and direct them through the vast wilderness unto the land of Canaan; so now also, that the Church or ² Israel of God might not be destitute of a cloud for their direction through the wilderness of this world to the spirituall Canaan, the land of everlasting life, this cloud of witnesses is propounded as their pattern. To which purpose their eyes should be alwayes fixed upon this *cloud of witnesses*.

In locum.

Gal. 6. 16.

2. It is called a *great cloud*, because it consists of so many thousands & myriads of Patriarchs, Prophets, Saints, and Martyrs. And so much also the other epithite doth expresse, *περιπαλοντες ημιν, compassing us about*, or placed round about us: so that which way soever we turn our selves or cast our eyes (as if the whole aire was filled with this cloud) we may behold famous examples for us to imitate and follow. And this cloud may firly be compared to *Elijah* his cloud, which at the first was but a little one, ³ *arising out of the sea like a mans hand*; but after a short time it overspread the

³ 1. K. 18. 45.

x Gen. 4.

v Ab. 7.

heaven which was black therewith: so this cloud at the first appeared very small, consisting but of one single person, viz. of righteous * Abel under the Law, and of v Stephen the Protomartyr under the Gospel. But it is now increased to an exceeding greatnesse, consisting of thousand thousands.

3. This cloud is said to consist of *witnesses*; for so the Apostle stileth the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs of Jesus Christ. And they are so called, *Activè, & Passivè, Actively, and Passively.*

* Heb. 11. 4.

1. Actively, because they did both in their life and doctrine admirably testifie Gods goodnesse, truth, mercy, power, providence, &c. and also by their example gave a singular testimony of the excellencie of their faith and pietie, whereby one-ly we may please God. And hereof the Apostle speaketh at large * in the former chapter, from the fourth to the 34 verse.

* Ibid. ver.

35, 36, 37-38

2. Passively, because they suffered with faith, patience, and constancie, manifold afflictions; and some of them martyrdome it self, for the testimonie of the truth of God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And this also our Apostle hath excellently set forth in the former chapter; * *Others also were racked, and others were tried by mockings, and scourgings: yea moreover, by bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered up and down in sheeps-skinnes and goats-skinnes, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in wildernesses, and mountains,*

tains, and dens, and caves of the earth. And that is it which maketh a perfect witnesse, when the truth is sealed unto by afflictions, and (if the case so required) by laying down their lives, and shedding of their blood: to which the original word *μαρτυρ* agreeth; which may be translated either *witnesses* or *martyrs*; a Martyr being nothing else but a witnesse suffering death in the cause of Christ Jesus and his Gospel. And well may these be called *witnesses*: for as they have already witnessed in this kinde while they lived upon earth, so also when the ^b Lord shall come to be a swift witnesse in judgment, this cloud of witnesses shall again passe us about, and witnesse (if we hold the same course which they have done) with us; and if not, against us. This then is the inducing reason & moving cause wherewith the Apostle doth excite and encourage us to the dutie of *running the race set before us*; viz. that seeing so many famous Saints and Martyrs have with faith and patience runne the race before us; and now (having finished their course) enjoy the prize, and sit crowned with glory in heaven; we also (moved with their example) do with the like zeal and pietie, faith and patience, runne the race set before us; that we also in our due time may receive the prize, even the crown of glory and immortalitie.

^b Mal. 3. 5.

2. The Apostle doth not content himself to have exhorted and moved us to undertake the duty of *running the race set before us*, and also to have encouraged us thereunto by the examples of the Saints and Martyrs of Christ; but also (knowing it

to be a matter not onely of high consequence, but also of great difficultie) he proceedeth to teach us in the second circumstance, how to prepare our selves that we may be the more fit and able to perform this great task required of us, *viz.* in these words (as they run in the originall) *Casting away every thing that presseth down, and the sinne that hangeth so fast on.* And the manner of his direction for preparation consisteth in removing such impediments as might prove heavie and troublesome, and so hinder us in the race. And these impediments are here expressed, 1. in generall ; 2. in particular.

1. In generall, he exhorteth us to cast away *every thing that presseth down.* The originall word *βρυον*, Beza translateth in Latin, *pondus*, a weight; Erasmus, *onus*, a burden; and others *crassam & sardam molem*; *whatsoever is grosse, heavie, and burdensome, or troublesome in the way.* Wherein he alludeth to the Metaphor of running in a race: for like as nothing doth sooner cause the champions to come short, and lose the prize, then grossenesse of body, or any heavie burden which they sustain and carrie with them: So neither is there any greater impediment to the agilitie and nimblenesse of the soul in the race and way to heaven, then those things which are burdensome to the spirit, and do depresse and keep it down from mounting aloft, and soaring towards heaven. Of which kinde are the delights of the world, the cares of this life, the lusts of the flesh, securitie, riot, and whatsoever else being heavie and troublesome doth hinder

der us in the spirituall race. All must be laid aside and cast away that we may runne *inoffenso pede*, without tripping or stumbling, without let or impediment, to the end of the race, that we may obtain the prize. Under this *synon*, the ancient Fathers do reduce all manner of impediments; not onely the having or using of things unlawfull, but also the abuse, or inexpedient use of things indifferent or commanded. For prayer may be *turned into sinne*; and our table may be made *a snare to catch us withall*, and our prosperitie, our ruine. The guests which were invited to the *great supper*, intangled themselves with farms, and oxen, and wives; things indifferent, and very lawfull to be used; but yet were they so used, or rather abused by them, that they proved sufficient impediments to exclude them for ever from that heavenly supper; as appeareth by that peremptorie and diffinitive sentence of the Master of the feast, *I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper*. Lawfulnesse without expedience, is not to be followed: & therefore the Apostle doth well exhort us to *use this world, as if we used it not*: for all these worldly things must be laid aside; and with the same Apostle, be *accounted as dung* and cast away, so farre, or when we finde them impediments in the race and way towards heaven; that so we may not be insnared, or shackled with the gives and fetters of these earthly things. It is dangerous to *lade our selves with thick clay*; which made our Saviour Christ say of a rich mans entering into heaven; *It is easier for a camel to go through the*

• Psal. 119. 7.

• Psal. 69. 22.

• Luk. 14. 16,
18, 19, 20.

Verf. 24.

• 1. Cor. 7. 31

• Phil. 3. 8.

• Habac. 2. 5.

• Mat. 19. 24.

^k Mark 10. 27

¹ Mar. 5. 29, 30

^m Epist. bb. 2.
apost. 6.

the eye of a needle, then for a rich man to enter into the kingdome of heaven. Yea, and S. Mark speaking of the same point, he affirmeth it to be ^k *ἄδύνατον* *ἰσχυρῶς* *ἀδύνατον*, impossible with men, though all things be possible with God. To conclude: it is the same in effect with that of our Saviour Christ, ¹ *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.* Whatsoever thou possessest in this present world, though it be as deare unto thee as thy right eye, or thy right hand; yet if it prove to be an impediment unto thee in thy way or race towards heaven, cast it away and abhorre it for ever: yea, though it be more precious then farms, and oxen, and worldly pelf; even as thy father that begat thee, thy mother that bare thee, or thy wife in thy bosome. Remember that heavenly counsel which Hierome gave to Heliodorus, exhorting him to renounce this present world, and follow Christ: ^m *Licet parvulus ex collo pendeat nepos, licet sparso crine & scissis vestibus ubera quibuste nutrierat mater ostendat, licet in limine pater jaceat: per calcatum perge patrem, siccis oculis ad vexillum crucis evola: Though thy prettie smiling son hang about thy neck, though thy mother with her hair cast about her shoulders, and garments rent, should hold forth and beseech thee by those breasts that once gave thee suck; yea, though thy father should lay himself crosse the threshold to stop the passage; yet trample upon him, passe over him, and with dry eyes haste thee to the banner of the crosse, the standard*

of

of Christ crucified. And a little after, *Solum pietatis genus est, in hac re esse crudelem: It is a singular kinde of pietie* (saith he) *to be cruell, untractable, or such a one as will not be intreated in this case.* With such resolution therefore should we reject lusts, pleasures, riches, honours, and whatsoever else doth presse down, and hinder us in the way to heaven. For our Saviour Christ saith, ^m *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* And again, ⁿ *He that loveth father or mother more then me, is not worthy of me.* And these are the generall impediments which must be cast away, because they presse down, and hinder us in running the race set before us.

^m Luk. 14. 26.

ⁿ Mat. 10. 37.

2. The Apostle in particular points out the chief impediments which we must especially above all other, as the most troublesome and dangerous, beware of, and cast away, *viz. sinne.* Which he doth therefore describe by a fit epithite to expresse the nature of it, *εὐπολιστὸν ἰσχυρίαν, the sinne that hangeth so fast on.* Which † Chrysostom saith may be taken either Actively, *viz.* which doth easily circumvent us; or Passively, *viz.* which may be easily circumvented by us. But I conceive the Active more properly to agree to this place; for I suppose that the Apostles intent & scope here, was not by this epithite to extenuate, but rather to aggravate the trouble of sinne; and to set it forth as a chief and principall impediment in running the race set before us. And according to this sense Beza doth translate it, ^o *Et peccato ad nos circumcingendos proclivi;* And the sinne which is so prone and ready to in-

† In locum.

o In Annot.

^p Ezck. 24. 5.

¹ Phil. 3. 14.

¹ Is locum.

¹ ubi suprà.

close us, or compasse us about. Erasmus readeth it, *Et tenaciter inherente peccato; And the sinne which doth adhere and cleave unto us*: which agreeth in the sense, though it answer not expressly to the words; *regisārai* (as Beza observeth) being never found in that signification, though there want not some which think, that the Apostle did allude to that place of the Prophet ^p Ezekiel, where the wicked are compared to a pot, whose rust, or scumme cleaveth so fast to it, that it cannot without great difficultie be scraped or rubbed off. And indeed sinne is very fitly so called from the effect, as then which nothing is more apt to compasse and inclose us, and as it were with strong bonds to detain us; & so hinder us in the race: so that when we should be nimble running, or ¹ *pressing forward toward the mark*; our feet, the feet of our souls, which are our affections (according to S. Austine) seem to be tied, or fettered together with the bonds of sinne and naturall corruption. ¹ *Semper est in promptu, ut cursum nostrum ad vitam beatam impediāt,* (saith Tremellius) *It is ever at hand to hinder our progresse to everlasting life.* And so ¹ Beza also; *Nos undique peccatum obsidet, ita ut excurrere non possumus: Sinne so besiegeth us on all parts, that we cannot runne directly on to the end of the race*: yea, the nature of sinne is like a scorpion, to embrace and claspe a man, and winding the tail about to sting and destroy. And this may be understood either Generally of all manner of sin, as hath already appeared; or else in Particular of some one peculiar kinde of sin. And so there are too kinde to which the word *corruptor*, *hanging so fast on*, doth most fitly agree.

I. It

1. If we understand in particular by it, *peccatum illud inhabitans in carne etiam sanctorum*; that sinne dwelling in the flesh even of the regenerate: which by no studie, labour, nor industrie can be utterly suppressed; but it will still trouble and hinder the godly, and assaie to turn them out of the right way, which leadeth to life everlasting. This is that originall concupiscence dwelling in the flesh, whereof the Apostle complains so bitterly:

But I see (saith he) another law in my members warring against the law of my minde, and bringing me into captivitie to the law of sinne which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? And elsewhere he calls it (according to divers interpreters) *A prick in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him*; and saith, that *thrice he besought the Lord that it might depart from him*; but received no other answer, but *My grace is sufficient for thee*: and therefore it may very fitly be called *invasor, the sinne that hangeth so fast on*. And it seemeth that the Apostle having this experience in himself formerly, and being yet mindefull thereof, exhorteth the Hebrews especially to labour to cast it off; not that in this life it can be wholly cast away and utterly rooted out; but yet by that grace from above, power is granted to the godly so to suppress it, that it may not carry them away *captive unto sinne*, or *reigne in their mortall bodies*; or ensnare them *in his insidies, with his subtile stratagems*.

2. If we understand it of some one particular beloved darling-sinne, wherewith a man is most delighted: as every man living hath first or last a pecca-

^c Rom. 7.23,
24.

^u A. COEL.
7.8.

^x Rom. 7.15.
^v Chap. 5.12.

tum in deliciis, a darling sin, which seems unto him but *peccatillum, some small pettie sinne*, though it be never so great. And commonly this kinde of sinne is so sweet unto the sinner, and so entirely affected, that a man will forsake all that ever he possesseth, yea and adventure life it self rather then forsake it: yea many a one hath lost heaven to enjoy it. And therefore this kinde of sinne also may fitly be called *αυαρία, or αμαρτία, the sinne that hangeth so fast on*. And the sinner will be contented to part with all other sinnes, that he may still enjoy this sinne. Hereof Naaman is usually alledged as an example, who acknowledged to Elisha that there was ^a *no God in all the world but in Israel*; and promised to offer neither burnt-sacrifice, nor offering unto any other God, save unto the Lord: but with condition that he might still enjoy his darling sinne of covetousnesse and ambitious desire of honour; to which purpose he must be dispensed with, to be an idolater still, as his own words seem to import; *Herein the Lord be mercifull unto thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and leaneth on mine hand; and I bowe my self in the house of Rimmon; the Lord be mercifull unto thy servant in this point*. And therefore is not this *the sinne that hangeth so fast on*? So Herod ^a feared John Baptist (knowing that he was a just man & an holy) and revered him: & when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly, untill he touched upon his darling sinne, saying, ^b *It is not lawfull for thee to have thy brothers wife*. But when that came into question, he resolved that John Baptist should lose his head, and he himself hazard his life and kingdome, rather

^a 2. King. 5.
15, 17,

18.

^a Mark. 6. 20.

^b Verse 8.

rather then part with his darling & beloved sinne. And so likewise S. Austine confesseth, that after his conversion his *peccatum in deliciis*, his darling sinne would not leave him of a long time; but still did as it were whisper into his eares inticing words, *O wilt thou forsake me now? &c.* And therefore it is cleare, that he also found it to be a sinne that hangeth fast on, and is not (without great difficultie) forsaken, or cast away. And therefore well might the Apostle point out sinne, and especially such sinnes as these, as the chief impediments in running the heavenly race; which if we desire, with *the cloud of witnesses*, to finish with joy, that we may obtain the prize of eternall glorie, we must *cast away every thing that presseth down*, all impediments in generall, especially *that sinne which hangeth so fast on*: And above all other sinnes these bewitching, beloved, and darling sinnes, which do so strongly depresse, ensnare, and hinder us in the way; that we may be the better fitted and enabled to *runne the race set before us*. And this may suffice concerning the second circumstance of Preparation.

3. In the last place the Apostle directeth us for the manner, how this race must be runne; *viz.* being directed by the word of God, encouraged by *the cloud of witnesses*, and prepared by removing or casting away all impediments, *the race must be runne with patience*. For all that went before is not sufficient; the prize will not be obtained except this also be added, that we hold out to the end of the race with patience. Every man is ready to set forward busily at the beginning, but their winde faileth before they come neare to the end of the

^c Gen. 28. 12.

^d Mar. 13. 13.

^e Mat 25. 4, 5

^f Isa 60. 8.

race; and so they faint, come short, and lose the prize. The way to heaven is fitly compared to ^c *Jacobs ladder, which stood upon the earth, but the top of it reached up to heaven:* and therefore it is to little purpose to ascend one or two of the rounds or steps of that ladder, and no more: there is no stepping into heaven untill we have passed them all; we cannot go to heaven *per saltum*, by a leap or jump; it is not had in a trice, but by going forward by steps and degrees, and holding out with patience unto the end. We must strive, and sweat, and labour, and yet persevere without fainting: for our Saviour Christ saith, ^d *Whosoever shall endure unto the end, he shall be saved.* For if in the way we wax weary, and with the ^e *foolish virgins fall asleep;* we shall be sure with them to be excluded when the Bridegroom cometh. It is not enough to begin well, nor to continue for a time onely; but we must runne *si sermone*, with patience: of *serm* and *serm*, of enduring under any thing: like a man that standeth under some weightie burden, readie to presse him down, and yet he resolveth with patience to sustain and endure it. So must we in this race be letted by no impediments, nor faint and be short-winded, but runne it throughout unto the end. Now therefore it appeares, that to the running of this race aright, the Apostle requireth three speciall vertues of us.

1. Diligence: for we must *runne*, not walk, or creep like snails; according to that prophesie of the Gentiles flocking to Christ; ^f *Qui sunt isti, qui volant ut nubes, &c. Who are these that flie like a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?* The way to heaven

ven is not easie, ora short journey, which every dreaming droan or creeping snail may perform with ease, going and staying at his pleasure; but (as Christ saith) ² *Regnum caelorum vim patitur, & violenti rapiunt illud; The kingdome of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* A man must be earnest and zealous in his religion: for if he be but ^h *luke-warm*, God threatneth to *spew him out of his mouth*. God loveth zeal and fervencie, but he cannot away with half-service, nor such as are ¹ almost Christians, like Agrippa. Under the Law he would not take lame, or halting sacrifice; and under the Gospel he abhorreth slow, lame, and imperfect service. Saint James saith, ^k *Be swift to heare*: and what he requireth in that one, is requisite in all other Christian duties. ^l *Cursed* (saith the Prophet) *be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently*. Peter and John ^m *ran both together*, striving who should come first to the sepulchre of Christ. How much more ought we to runne, and strive to outrunne others, that we may come first to be with him in glorie?

² Matt. 11. 12

^h Apoc. 3. 16.

¹ Act. 26. 28.

^k Jam. 1. 19.

^l Jer. 48. 10.

^m Joh. 20. 4.

2. Abstinence: Whatsoever letteth and hindereth us in the race, must be cast away: we are ⁿ burdens to our selves, and therefore had need to be free from all other impediments which might molest and trouble us in the way, when we should be nimble footing it towards heaven.

ⁿ Job. 7. 6.

3. Patience: For if we be short-winded, and faint in the way, we lose the prize, and run in vain. And this last vertue of Patience, is required for two reasons:

1. For suffering, and enduring afflictions and other

o Psal. 19. 15.

p Heb. 12.
2, 3.

other impediments: for patience will teach us to passe through all the pricks, even with joy. When we consider, or cast our eyes upon the manifold troubles, afflictions, crosses, and enemies, which we must encounter with in the way; our spirits may peradventure begin to faint and droop within us: but if we lift up our eyes from the earth, and look to Christ *calling*, the Spirit *assisting*, the Father *blessing*, the Angels *comforting*, the Word *directing*, and the Crown *inviting*; it will make us like the^o Sunne, *which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoyceth as a mightie giant to run his race.* And therefore the Apostle insinuateth this motive to stirre us up to patience in the race; *p Looking unto Jesus the authour and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the crosse, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider therefore him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your mindes.* Look to the prize with the cloud of witnessers; and that will give us patience in the midst of all troubles and afflictions. The hope of that made Jeremiah his *prison* patiently to endure, Isaiah his *saw*, Andrew his *cruell crosse*, and Laurence his *burning gridiron*: this moved Peter and Andrew to *imbrace*, and *kisse the crosse*, whereon they were presently to be crucified: for they rejoyced to suffer here, because they expected a kingdome elsewhere, knowing that if they *suffered with Christ*, they should also be *glorified with him.* This filled the heart of Paul with courage to answer the brethren, (which besought him with teares

teares, not to go up to Jerusalem, because the daughters of Philip the Evangelist being prophetesses, foretold what grievous afflictions should befall him there) in these words, ¹ *What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound onely, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.* This example is worthie of our imitation, that so nothing may terrifie, daunt, discourage, or stay us in the race. Remember that Hierom saith to Heliodorus, ² *Paupertatem times? Sed beatus Christus pauperes appellat. Labore terroris? At nemo athleta sine sudore coronatur. De cibo cogitas? Sed fides famem non timet. Super nudum metuis humum excessajuniis membra collidere? Sed Dominus tecum jacet.* Doe st thou fear povertie? but Christ saith, Blessed are the poore. Doth danger afright thee? but no champion is crowned without labour. Art thou carefull for thy food? but saith feareth not famine. Art thou afraid to commit thy body, consumed with fasting, to the naked ground? but the Lord will lie there by thee. Can the souldier be in the battell, and not fight? the ship among the waves, and not be tossed? or the Christian in the Church militant, and not be buffeted? No, no; these and other such like troubles will meet us, and oppose us in the race. *Delicatus es, si & hic vis gaudere cum seculo, & postea regnare cum Christo,* Thou art too delicate and tender, if thou desirest both to take thy pleasure with this world here, and also to reigne with Christ hereafter. Remember that of our Saviour, spoken to his disciples, ³ *Ye shall be betrayed also of your parents, and of your brethren, and kinsmen, and friends: and some of you shall they put to death: And ye shall be hated of all men for*

¹ Act. 21. 13.

² Hierom. epist. ad Heliodorum.

³ Hierom. ubi suprad.

⁴ Luk. 21. 16, 17.

Verſ. 15.

* Heb. 10. 36.

* Num. 11. 5.

† 2. Tim. 4. 7.

* Phil. 2. 12.

* Bern. de du-
obus diſcip.
eunt. ad Em-
maum.* Gen. 32. 14,
28, 19.* Pſal. 136.
* Gen. 29.
18, 10.

my names ſake: and the counſel which he gave them in that caſe, *In your patience poſſeſſe your ſouls.*

2. The Apoſtle ſaith truly, that *we have all need of patience*, that we might continue, and hold out to the end of the race; or els the happie prize is loſt for ever. We muſt not in this race be like thoſe carnall Iſraelites, which after they were come to the very ſkirts of Canaan, then looked back to the * *ſleſh-pots of Egypt*, remembering the *fiſh* which they did eat in Egypt for nought, the *cucumbers*, and the *melons*, and the *leeks*, and the *onions*, and the *garlick*: but as we have begun, ſo muſt we *finiſh our courſe*, and *work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling*. You ſhall finde a man which begins well, but faints and quails before he come to the end of the race. How many ſhall we ſee for a fit very devout, *Quorum oculi ſunt ſicut piſcina Heſhbon prae multitudine lacrymarum*; ſed (*hora compunctionis tranſacta*) ita *ſuperbi ſunt ſicut ante*? *Whoſe eyes are like the pools of Heſhbon, for the multitude of their tears: But (the houre of compunction being paſt) they are as proud as they were before, and return to their old bias again?* Many make goodly glorious ſhews for a time; but miſcarry before the end. This is not *to run the race which is ſet before us, with patience and perſeverance*: *b* Jacob wreſtled (all the night) unto the breaking of the day, before he prevailed, and obtained the bleſſing. And our ſervice to God ſhould be like his mercies to us, which *endure for ever*. Jacob ſerved *a ſeven yeares for Rachel*; and the Scripture teſtifieth, that *they ſeemed to him but a few dayes, becauſe he loved her*. Then why ſhould we think much to ſerve all the

the dayes of our lives for this prize? For what was Rachel to ~~be~~ ^{have} ~~the~~ ^{heaven}? The sailer oftentimes passeth the main sea quiet, and yet suffereth shipwrack in the haven. The corn sometimes promiseth a rich harvest in the blade, and yet is blasted in the eare: the tree pretendeth plenty in the blossom, and yet affords but withered fruit. *Remember Lots wife; *Conversa est in columnam salis, ut te condiciat* (saith Austine) *She was turned into a pillar of salt, to season thee with the salt of grace,* to beware of the like sin. Judas lived with Jesus, and for a time ranne well; and yet playing the Apostate, and betraying his Lord and Master, became his own executioner, and is now gone to his place. So unlesse thou, having laid a strong foundation, dost build upon Christ ^{the rock}, and endure in love, continue in faith, and runne with patience to the end of the race; thou art but like a patient that was almost recovered from a dangerous disease; but falling into a relapse, is more deadly, or incurably sick: Or like unto a man that had almost ascended to the top of some tower, or steep rock; but slipping falls headlong to the bottome, without hope of ever attaining to his desire. * *He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdome of God.* And therefore labour still at thy plough, that thy task may be finished: walk still on thy way, that thy journey may be ended: run out thy race with patience, that the prize may be obtained. If the husbandman doth follow his ground diligently, and stirre it as carefully; but goeth not on to sow his seed, harrow it, & gather out the weeds: what crop shall he reap at the time of harvest? The tree that

* Luk. 17. 32.

n Mar. 7. 24.

o Luk. 9. 62.

p Mat. 25. 30

1 Revel. 11. 4

r Soliloq.
cap. 27.

4 Mat. 13. 20.

c Psal. 84 7.

u Phil. 2. 12.

x 2. Tim. 1. 7

8.

hath goodly stems and branches, with fair leaves, but no fruit, is provided but for the fire: & that p̄servant which increaseth not his talent, shal be cast into outer darknes: there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Some have seemed to nestle in the clouds, yea have been ^astarres of heaven; and yet cast down to the earth, with the dragons tail. *Vidimus lucem obtenebrasse, & de tenebris lucem processisse* (saith S. Augustine) *We have seen the light turned into darknes, and light proceed out of darknes*, or (as our Saviour saith) *Publicans and sinners enter into heaven, & the children of the kingdome cast out into outer darknes*. We must not therefore content our selves to begin well, nor to have made a commendable progresse for a time in the spiritual race; but as the childe increaseth & goeth forward in strength & stature, untill he come to the perfect pitch of a man: so must we go forward, and grow in grace, from ^tsmoking flax, to a burning flame: from a grain of mustard-seed, to a branched tree: from grafting, to growing: from growing, to increasing: from increasing, to strengthening: from faith, to hope: from hope, to love: from love, to good living: so marching on ^efrom strength to strength, never staying untill we all appeare before God in Sion. Let us therefore, both in the generall race of Christianity, & also in the particular race of our private callings, begin in faith, continue in patience, and ^uwork out our salvation with fear and trembling: that so having, with the Apostle, ^xfought the good fight, finished our course, & kept the faith, we may at last, with the cloud of witnesses, obtain the prize, even the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shal give to all them that love his appearing.

F I N I S.

